

Canada's Most Bonused Industry

Over \$3,000,000 voted annually to aid farmer—Why imperil the good done with this money?

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The importance of the farming industry to the people of Canada is abundantly demonstrated by the fact that there is not a province in the Dominion which has not established a department of Government to promote and safeguard the interests of agriculture. From Atlantic to Pacific a veritable army of experts is engaged in assisting the farmers of the country in their efforts to grow bigger and better crops, to produce finer fruit, to raise better live stock and to make more excellent butter and cheese. Experimental farms, where all manner of crops and soils are being tested for the general benefit of the agricultural community, dot the broad expanse of the Dominion. Agricultural colleges of international reputation, built and maintained by Government, are open to receive the sons of the soil, intent on acquiring that knowledge which will make them more expert farmers. Societies and associations, supported generously with provincial funds, exist in every county for the purpose of bringing the farmers together and encouraging them to improve the quality of their products. Problems of cold storage, the destruction of noxious weeds, the extension of markets, the spraying of fruit, drainage and a hundred and one other questions are handled by experts in the employ of the State and for the direct advantage of the farmers. In brief, between the Dominion and the Provincial Governments, this industry is being bonused annually in these directions to the extent of several million dollars, and there seems to be no limit to the extent to which the State will go to carry out its paternal policy.

Expenditures of the Dominion Government.

In the first place, there is the Dominion Government. During the fiscal year 1909-10, it expended close on to a million dollars through its Department of Agriculture to help the farmers of Canada. Of this sum over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was paid out to cover the expenses of the thirteen experimental farms maintained by the Government. Nearly two hundred and fifty thousand dollars went towards putting into force policies for protecting the health of live stock. The dairy division spent \$13,908.42; the fruit division \$33,667.91; the live stock department

\$49,820.96, and there were expenditures for establishing fumigating stations, distributing bulletins, taking a census of cows, sending a commission to Europe to make investigations into the swine industry, experimenting in cold storage, and numerous other services all calculated to benefit the farming industry.

Ontario Spends Nearly a Million.

The Province of Ontario, which has probably the best machinery of any of the nine provinces for promoting helpful work among the farmers, and which incidentally spends far more than any of them to achieve this purpose, expended, in 1910, the sum of \$748,169.33. In this total, the largest item was \$236,568.85, the cost of maintaining the Ontario Agricultural College and Macdonald Institute for the year. Agricultural and horticultural societies were assisted to the extent of \$122,721.31; the dairy branch took \$57,795.58; the fruit branch \$41,839.83; the live stock branch \$31,770.10. Nearly \$15,000 was spent on reports and bulletins and \$37,592.19 went to the staff of district representatives and teachers of agriculture. Deducting a departmental revenue of \$113,457.09, the net expenditure of the province was \$634,712.24. This year the estimates call for an expenditure of \$837,907.

Help Given in French Canada.

The sister province of Quebec spent, during the fiscal year 1909-1910, the sum of \$294,850.01 under similar headings. It also provided, through its Department of Agriculture, \$60,000 for the improvement of rural roads. It gave \$146,700.00 to various agricultural societies, farmers' clubs, associations, etc. It handed \$30,000 to butter and cheese syndicates; expended \$17,000 for the encouragement of the dairy industry and \$5,000 for the benefit of the fruit industry; it paid out \$8,000 for a series of lectures on agriculture and provided \$30,000 for the maintenance of agricultural schools. For the coming year the Legislature has voted \$322,600 for the work of the department, with \$250,000 for improving rural roads.

Farming Down by the Sea.

Turning now to the Maritime Provinces, where agriculture does not bulk quite so large, Nova Scotia is found to invest approximately \$75,000 a year in its agricultural interests. Of this \$30,000 goes to the Agricultural College and Experimental Farm at Truro; \$15,000 is paid out annually in assistance to agricultural exhibitions, \$10,000 to agricultural societies and the balance is expended on agricultural meetings and the general work of the department.

New Brunswick's expenditure for 1909-1910 was \$41,478.30. The largest item, \$12,987.13, was made up of grants to various agricultural societies; \$4,759.16 went towards introducing improved methods of stock raising; \$4,172.65 was spent on extending markets; \$659.71 was paid out to sons of farmers to enable them to attend agricultural colleges. Poultry raising, horticulture, cold storage, dairying, grain competitions, etc., all received assistance.

Little Prince Edward Island's Subsidy.

For the year ending September 30th, 1910, the little island province of Prince Edward Island appropriated \$8,846.03 for the benefit of agriculture. Of this \$1,130.44 was paid to the Farmers' Institutes of the province to aid them in carrying on their educative work; \$635 went into scholarships to enable the sons of farmers to take courses at the Agricultural College at Truro. Substantial sums were expended in aiding the Fruit Growers' Association, the Dairy Association and the Poultry Association. With a revenue of \$2,533.61, the net expenditure of the Department was \$6,312.42, by no means an inconsiderable sum for so small a province.

Turning the Prairie Into Wheat Land.

Passing to the Prairie Provinces, an investigation of the Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba for the year 1910 discloses that this province expended \$143,215.13 in the interests of agriculture. The largest portion of this amount went to the Agricultural College, which cost the province, in salaries and maintenance, \$67,839.84. The sum of \$47,871.93 was appropriated to Associations and Farmers' Institutes. There was a revenue from the College of \$11,466.25, making the net expenditure of the province on the Department of Agriculture for the year \$131,748.89.

Saskatchewan and Alberta Help Their Farmers.

Saskatchewan's vote for 1911 in aid of its farming interests, which may be taken as a fair criterion of the annual provincial expenditure in this direction, is \$289,870. Of this amount \$47,100 is for general farming; \$17,350 for the live stock industry and \$177,300 for the dairy and poultry industry.

Alberta has voted \$384,340 for twenty-four items falling under the head of agriculture, but as it is expected that there will be a repayment of \$224,000 for advances and loans made in previous years to various branches of the work, the net expenditure will only amount to \$160,340. In this year's budget the largest item is \$200,000, which will be used in making advance payments in

aid of creamery work. Twelve thousand dollars goes towards establishing a dry farming experimentation station; \$20,000 towards the destruction of noxious weeds; \$14,500 to encourage dairy work, etc.

Development on the Pacific Coast.

British Columbia, which spent \$74,063.39 for agriculture in the fiscal year 1909-10, has voted over two hundred thousand dollars for the year ending March 31st, 1912. Of this agricultural associations get \$78,500; \$15,000 goes towards demonstrations of spraying and fruit packing in orchards; a similar sum is paid to the Farmers' Institutes; \$10,000 is voted to aid fruit exhibitions.

Canadians Give Over Three Millions to the Farmer.

Summing up and taking the totals for the Dominion and the provinces, it is found that the people of Canada expend approximately the large sum of \$3,300,000 per annum to bonus the farming industry, and that this sum is being increased very considerably each year. That the money is well spent, and that it is paid out ungrudgingly goes without saying. The increased productivity of the farms, the growing efficiency of the farmers, the improved quality of farm produce, the achievements of the agricultural colleges and the experimental farms all testify to the value of the work undertaken by the various Governments of the country in the interests of the farming community.

Shall These Three Millions be Wasted?

The point is, however, that all this vast expenditure of money and brains by the State in aid of Canadian agriculture should be taken into account before any final decision is made on any fiscal question affecting the interests of the whole country. The public are prone to regard the farmer as standing in a position of isolation, unconsidered heretofore when tariffs have been framed. On the contrary, there is no industry in Canada which has received such intensive and extensive financial treatment from the Government as this same farming industry. It has been bonused to an extent unknown before, and no one has objected.

Do Not Court Invasion.

Further, what effect will reciprocity in natural products have on this phase of the situation? Can the farmer or the people as a whole afford to have the country spend its millions to improve agricultural conditions, and then find its markets invaded by foreign producers, and all its educative work made of no avail? This is a possibility which should not be overlooked.